



re:connect

Isolation and Friendship

St. Martin-in-the-Fields
Saturday 10 October, 5pm & 7.30pm
Online from Thursday 15 October

Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Toby Spence, tenor
Oliver Zeffman, conductor



asmf.org/reconnect

PROGRAMME

Britten Elegy for Viola Solo

Robert Smissen, viola

Huw Watkins “How” (from *Eight Songs from Isolation*)

Toby Spence, tenor

Huw Watkins Three Welsh Songs

Britten Serenade for Tenor, Horn and strings, Op.31

Toby Spence, tenor

Stephen Stirling, horn

Prokofiev (arr. Barshai) Visions Fugitives, Op.22

ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS

Tomo Keller, leader

Violin I

Tomo Keller

Katie Stillman

Helena Smart

Rebecca Scott

Catherine Morgan

Viola

Robert Smissen

Ian Rathbone

Nicholas Barr

Flute

Sarah Newbold

Clarinet

Thomas Lessels

Cello

Stephen Orton

Will Schofield

Juliet Welchman

Horn

Stephen Stirling

Violin II

Martin Burgess

Jennifer Godson

Jeremy Morris

Helen Paterson

Bass

Lynda Houghton

Ben Russell

Piano

Huw Watkins

Benjamin Britten wrote his Elegy for viola - probably for himself to play - after he left school at sixteen years old. He'd been at Gresham's School for two years and didn't have a happy time there. On leaving he said 'I didn't think I should be sorry to leave', but found that he missed them all the same.

How by **Huw Watkins** is one of eight new songs written during lockdown that together make up 'Eight Songs from Isolation' - an opera shot entirely on iPhone and recently released on Apple Music. "When, at the height of lockdown, Oliver Zeffman invited me to write one of the Eight Songs from Isolation he was commissioning, I immediately looked at the poetry of Philip Larkin. His bleak poem, How, seemed to resonant strongly this spring. I wanted to capture, in my setting, some of the stark emptiness and desolation of the poem." Huw Watkins

As one of Wales' leading composers, **Watkins** was the ideal choice to write a new work to mark the 60th birthday of HRH The Prince of Wales, in 2008. The choice of work was an easy one for Watkins who describes his settings of Welsh folk songs as 'something of a guilty pleasure!'

Benjamin Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and strings centres on settings of six English poems, broadly based around night, sleep and dreams, which are framed by a Prologue and Epilogue for solo horn. These are to be played without the use of valves, in the style of an ancient hunting horn that can achieve only the notes of the natural harmonic series of the horn.

The six central movements are very different in character, in keeping with their respective texts, but each showcases the outstanding virtuosity required from the two soloists. This is particularly evident in the Nocturne, which features duet cadenzas for voice and horn.

Visions Fugitives by **Prokofiev** in a cycle of whimsical, effervescent and bright miniatures - originally for solo piano - written for friends of the composer. In his arrangement for string orchestra, Barshai has set 15 of the 20 vignette-like movements.

TOBY SPENCE TENOR



An honours graduate and choral scholar from New College, Oxford, Toby Spence studied at the Opera School of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He was the winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society 2011 Singer of the Year award.

In concert Toby has sung with some of the most renowned orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, London Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. He has appeared as a guest soloist at the Easter Festival in Salzburg and the Edinburgh International Festival. He has worked with an impressive array of conductors such as Christoph von Dohnanyi, Sir Simon Rattle, Michael Tilson Thomas, Sir Antonio Pappano, Valery Gergiev, Colin Davis, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Gustavo Dudamel, Edward Gardner, Roger Norrington and Charles Mackerras.

A prolific recitalist, Toby has given numerous solo recitals for BBC Radio 3 and at London's Wigmore Hall and has appeared at LSO St Luke's, Opera de Lille, at Northern Ireland Opera's Festival of Voice, Janacek's Brno International Music Festival and Aldeburgh Festival. He has made numerous recordings for Deutsche Grammophon, Decca, BMG, Philips, Collins, Linn Records, Hyperion and EMI.

Recent appearances included The Seasons with the Philharmonie de Paris; Bruckner's F minor Mass with the Sinfonieorchester Basel; Das Lied von der Erde with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; Liszt's Faust Symphony with the Mozarteum

Orchestra Salzburg; The Creation with the Houston Symphony Orchestra; Handel's Messiah, Beethoven's Choral Fantasy and Haydn's Nelson Mass with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in Mumbai; War Requiem at the Slovak Philharmonic Concert Hall and with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande; Missa Solemnis with the London Symphony Orchestra; Dvořák's Stabat Mater with Houston Symphony Orchestra; Britten's War Requiem with Toronto Symphony Orchestra; Orff's Carmina Burana with the Shanghai Symphony cond. Long Yu for Deutsche Grammophon's 120th anniversary; Jonathan Dove's There Was A Child with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Beethoven 9 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

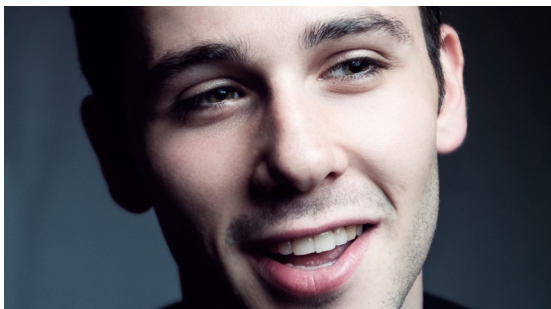
Recent opera engagements have included Ghandi Satyagraha, Paris La Belle Hélène, Lensky Eugene Onegin and the title role in Charles Gounoud's Faust at the English National Opera; Captain Vere Billy Budd for Teatro Real, Opera di Roma and Royal Opera House Covent Garden; Anatol Vanessa for Frankfurt Opera; Don Ottavio at the Liceu Barcelona; Eisenstein Die Fledermaus and Antonio The Tempest for the Metropolitan Opera; Don Ottavio and Tito for the Vienna State Opera; Essex Gloriana and Tamino Die Zauberflöte for the Royal Opera House, where his previous roles have also included Ferdinand The Tempest, David Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Count Almaviva Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Ramiro La Cenerentola and Tom Rakewell The Rake's Progress; Madwoman Curlew River for the Edinburgh Festival; Tito, Tamino and Henry Morosus Die Schweigsame Frau for the Bavarian State Opera; Tom Rakewell and David Die Meistersinger at Opéra de Paris; Bénédicte Beatrice et Bénédicte with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra; Tito in Clemenza di Tito in Berlin; Aschenbach Death in Venice, Herod Salome and Peter Grimes.

Highlights of the 19/20 season included Pylades Iphigénie with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; the title role of Lazarus at the Kammerakademie Potsdam; Florestan in Fidelio at the Stavanger Concert Hall, Mahler's Das Klagendes Lied and Mendelssohn's Die Erste Walpurgisnacht with the Houston Symphony Orchestra; Mahler's Symphony No. 8 at Atlanta Symphony Hall; The Dream of Gerontius at the Slovak Philharmonic Concert Hall; Missa Solemnis at the NFM Wroclaw

Philharmonic and Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings at the Prague Rudolfinum and the Auditorium de l'Orchestre National de Lyon.

Plans for the 20/21 season include Florestan Fidelio for Garsington Opera and Greek National Opera, Aschenbach Death in Venice for Opera du Rhin and his role debut as Parsifal for Opera North and at the Edinburgh Festival. On the concert platform, Toby sings Das Lied von der Erde with the Budapest Festival Orchestra, cond. Ivan Fischer, Janáček's The Diary of One who Disappeared at the Hong Kong Arts Festival, the St Matthew Passion with the Bach Choir, and Beethoven 9 with the Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall.

OLIVER ZEFFMAN CONDUCTOR



Described by The Telegraph as “phenomenally promising”, the young British conductor Oliver Zeffman was the Classical Music nominee for The Times Breakthrough Artist Award at the 2018 South Bank Sky Arts Awards.

For the 2019/20 season, Oliver was the Associate Conductor of the London Chamber Orchestra, with whom he toured to the Mariinsky Theatre's Stars of the White Nights Festival to give the Russian premiere of George Benjamin's Lessons in Love and Violence.

Over the last few months, as the ongoing pandemic shut down live music, Oliver - collaborating with Apple Music -

commissioned and recorded a new opera-film, *Eight Songs from Isolation*, with contributions from some of the leading artists of today, including Thomas Adès, Nico Muhly, Sarah Connolly and Iestyn Davies.

Recent and upcoming debuts include with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse, Ulster Orchestra, KMH Symfonieorkester, Oulu Sinfonia, Urals Youth Symphony Orchestra, Jersey Symphony Orchestra, West Green House Opera and Chelsea Opera Group. Oliver has worked as an assistant to Valery Gergiev, preparing orchestras including the Rotterdam and Luxembourg Philharmonics; Daniel Harding, for whom he has prepared Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* with both the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and the New Japan Philharmonic; and to Gustavo Dudamel, Gianandrea Noseda and Vladimir Jurowski.

A keen advocate for contemporary music, Oliver has, to date, commissioned and premiered twenty-one new works from some of the most exciting composers of today; and has given the Russian premieres of a number of important 20th and 21st century pieces - as well as *Lessons in Love and Violence* - Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, Walton's *Façade* and Ligeti's *Aventures and Nouvelles Aventures*.

A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, Oliver Zeffman originally studied History and Russian at Durham University and also spent a year at the Rimsky-Korsakov St Petersburg State Conservatory under the direction of Alexander Polishchuk.

ROBERT SMISSEN VIOLA

Born in Mansfield Nottinghamshire, Robert Smissen won a scholarship to Chethams School of Music and went on to study at the Guildhall School of Music, from which he graduated with distinction. After playing with the European Community Youth Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe he took the position of Principal Viola with the Northern Sinfonia before joining the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, with whom he has been Principal Viola for over 25 years. He often performs as a soloist with the orchestra, and as a member of the ASMF chamber ensemble and the Pro Arte Piano Quartet he has performed, broadcast and recorded all over the world. Outside of music, being a father of five keeps him more than busy, but his other interests include walking his six dogs, gardening, DIY, early renaissance art, philosophy, cooking and cricket.





STEPHEN STIRLING HORN

Stephen Stirling is a renowned soloist. Recordings of Mozart Horn Concertos with the City of London Sinfonia feature constantly on Classic FM and he gave the world première of Gary Carpenter's Horn Concerto with the BBC Philharmonic on Radio 3. He holds the unique distinction of having been the soloist for the opening of both of London's newest purpose built concert halls - Cabot Hall and King's Place.

He has a world-wide reputation as a chamber musician, in constant demand at festivals in the UK and abroad as well as being a founder member of Endymion, The Fibonacci Sequence, the Audley Trio, Arpège, and the New London Chamber Ensemble. Amongst over 75 recorded chamber works, Brahms' Horn Trio, with the Florestan Trio, was nominated for a Gramophone award. CDs of York Bowen, Thomas Dunhill, Stanford, and Horn a Fibonacci/Deux Elles CD of rare chamber works featuring the horn, have met with great critical acclaim. Principal of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, and the City of London Sinfonia, Guest Principal Horn with the Capella Andrea Barca, Orquestra de Cadaques and Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and member then Guest Principal of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Stephen is privileged to have worked with many of the world's finest chamber orchestras.

Professor of Horn at Trinity College of Music, on the faculty of the Yellow Barn Summer Music School and Festival in Vermont, Stephen is also a veteran of the Dartington International Summer School.

NEXT TIME AT ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS:

re:connect - Regeneration

Saturday 24 October 5pm & 7.30pm
(& online from Thursday 29 October)

Jean Féry Rebel Chaos from Les Les Éléments
Saint-Saens Le Deluge, Op.45: Prelude for strings
Samantha Fernando Lost Things for solo flute
Mozart Flute Concerto in D, K.314
Copland Appalachian Spring

CATCH-UP ONLINE:

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Overcoming Distance

Streaming until Saturday 31 October

Bach Sarabande from Suite No.5 for Cello solo

Messiaen Abîme des oiseaux for Clarinet solo

MacMillan Horn Interlude from 'Since it was the day of Preparation...'

Bach Brandenburg Concerto No.4

Copland Quiet City

Mozart Symphony No.29

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Requiem For Our Time

Streaming until Saturday 17 October

Arvo Pärt Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten

Gurney Sleep

Fauré Requiem (arr. Rutter)

Carolyn Sampson, soprano

Roderick Williams, baritone

St. Martin's Voices

Andrew Earis, conductor

Tickets asmf.org/reconnect